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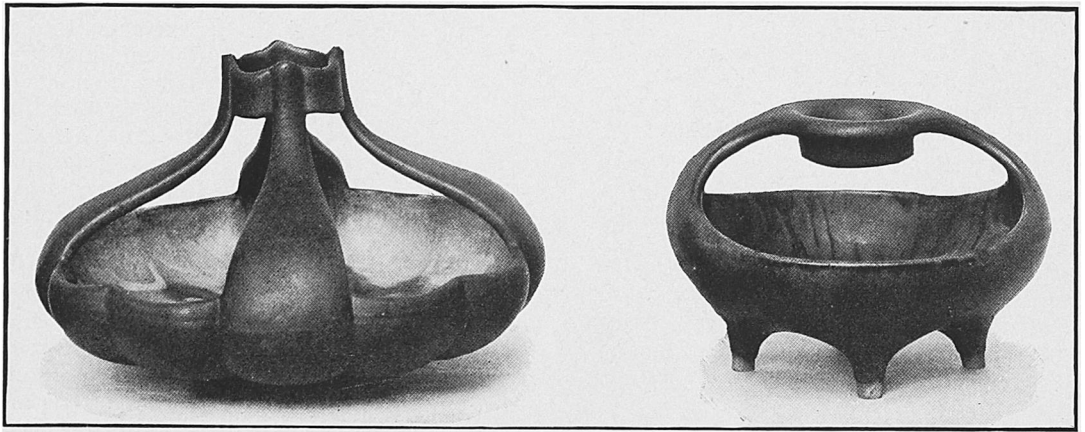
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VAZ-BOWLS

Not only in color, but in quality of crystallizations, there is the widest range of changes imaginable in Vasekraft, for both matte and mirror glazes are successfully achieved and deep and sur-

face crystals appear to lend further variety, while the streaking and running of two kinds of colors or glazes into each other result in effects that can never be duplicated."

THE OLD-FASHIONED SAMPLER

Illustrations of Samplers Are from the Collection of the late A. W. Drake of New York City

BY FRIEDA VAN EMDEN

FINE needlework like other handicrafts threatens in time to become a lost art. Aside from the peasants of different nationalities, who from mother to daughter have kept at the same kind of work, it is only the convent-bred girl in this country and in Europe whose education still includes the making of the fine and intricate work which equals the exquisite products of past generations.

In the Latin countries, where under the old *duenna* system, girls still are prisoners of convention until they are married, many girls of good family still spend their days at fine needlework, patiently killing time and awaiting events.

The American girl, as a rule, is quite proud and satisfied when she has mastered the simpler forms of sewing, knitting, crocheting and embroidering. The new knitting craze has drawn attention to the fact that young ladies, and matrons also, have had to learn how to knit, which would have amazed our grandmothers, for their very education started with knitting.

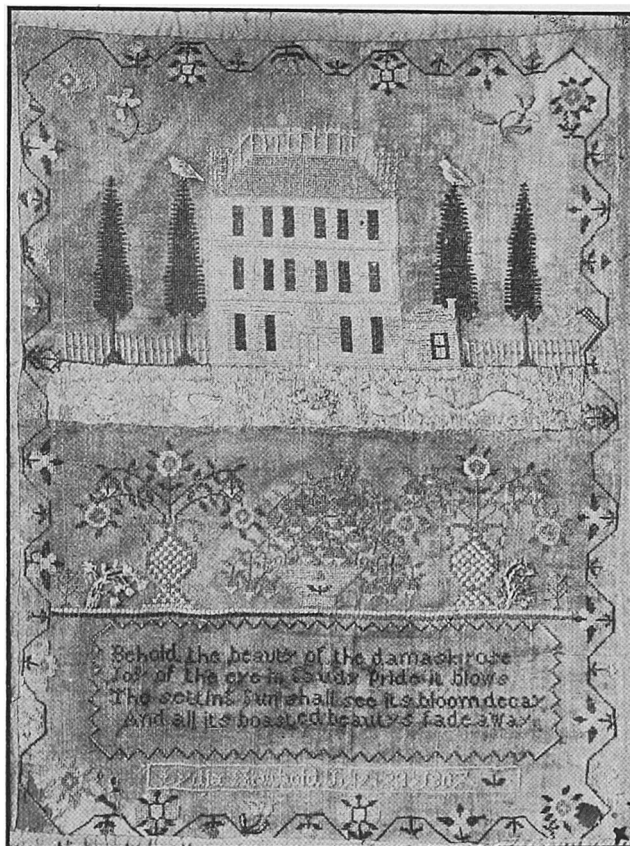
The modern woman can justly claim that she has not had the time to perfect herself along these lines, for

life to-day is so much more complicated than it ever has been before. Women have acquired many interests outside of the home, children and clothes. A large percentage has to support itself in the business world and therefore on the educational schedule of the modern girl little or no time has been allotted to needlework.

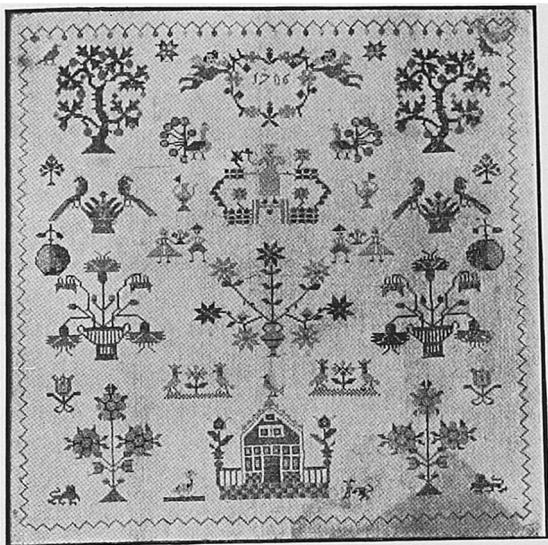
Two generations ago it still was the chief part of a girl's education. In those days a family used to take care of its spinster relatives, who, in return, made themselves useful in the usually large households, and whose skill at sewing and needlework was their chief asset and means of support. Now the spinster has turned to what then would have been considered man's work.

Our average healthy up-to-date girl looks more natural and at ease on court or course, on horseback or skates, than bent for tedious hours over an embroidery frame.

Though this evolution has meant a loss of good qualities, namely, the infinite patience bred by close application, the dexterity of the hands and the thoroughness which so greatly characterized our great-grand and grand-



AMERICAN SAMPLER: DATED 1807



DUTCH SAMPLER

AMERICAN SAMPLER WHICH IS UNUSUAL IN COLOR:
PREVAILING TONES ARE SOFT PINKS AND
BLUES. DATED 1832



mothers, the gain has been the splendid physical development of our young womanhood of to-day, which after ages of slavery to the routine of an—to our tastes—insipid and unhealthy indoor home-life, has come back to the old Grecian ideal of beauty through physical culture.

That is why our generation and the growing one have considered the making of samplers of so little importance, although they are still being made, and the purpose and methods are the same as they have been for centuries. On a sampler are recorded in patterns and rows the different needlework stitches a girl has learned and wants to remember. The very best work is put into a sampler, in fact, the making of one used to be and still is a girl's final examination in the art of needlework.

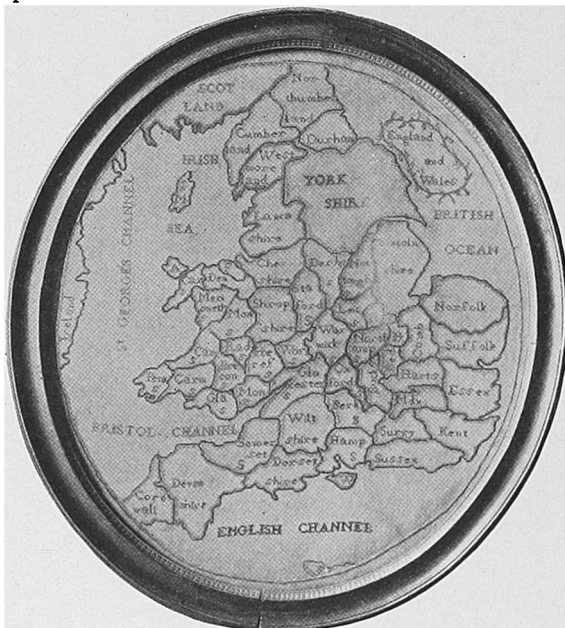
The English, Dutch and American sampler of the eighteen and nineteenth centuries are much alike in design and coloring, though the English sampler shows by far the finer and more interesting work. The English sampler is worked on the finest of canvas, and is worked with correspondingly fine materials. Most of them are done in cross-stitch or tapestry-stitch. Some samplers are extremely amusing, aside from being attractive and decorative, because as the crowning glory the little girl has often added a picture in which she entirely followed her own phantasy and inclination. In child-like simplicity and generally with the most painstaking care a house, a flower-basket, a pasture, a couple of people or some animals have been worked in. Or maybe a religious quotation and then the name and age of the maker and the date have been added.

The German sampler presents, in addition to the cross-stitch and tapestry-work, lace-insertion, damask-darning, bird's-eye-stitching, etc.

The Spanish samplers, which were on view at the Metropolitan Museum a little while ago, are remarkable for their beautiful bright coloring. They show fine open and drawnwork in connection with embroidery and are often worked in bullion-thread. Whereas, American, Dutch, English and German samplers are generally worked in worsted or cotton, silk is used to a great extent on the Spanish sampler. At the same time the Museum also had some charming Mexican and Indian bead-work samplers on view.

In studying old samplers we are astonished at the extreme youth of the makers of this exquisite work.

Most girls have proudly added their age and this varies from seven to twelve years. How they must have been kept at it to the exclusion of play and healthy outdoor life, these little premature ladies, for in the thwarted opinion of the times this did ill-become a young lady of quality. However, their early training seems to have instilled in them a great love for needlework, for from the time of the earliest Middle Ages beautiful work abounds in clothing as well as in furnishings of the home. In creating with the needle most women had their only way of expressing their artistic feeling, it was their one



ENGLISH SAMPLER: MAP OF ENGLAND AND WALES



TWO EARLY AMERICAN SAMPLERS
DATED 1795

and only diversion and pastime, in short, their main interest in life. To excel in it was woman's chief distinction, and mainly on account of the early training their needlework attained such a high grade of perfection.

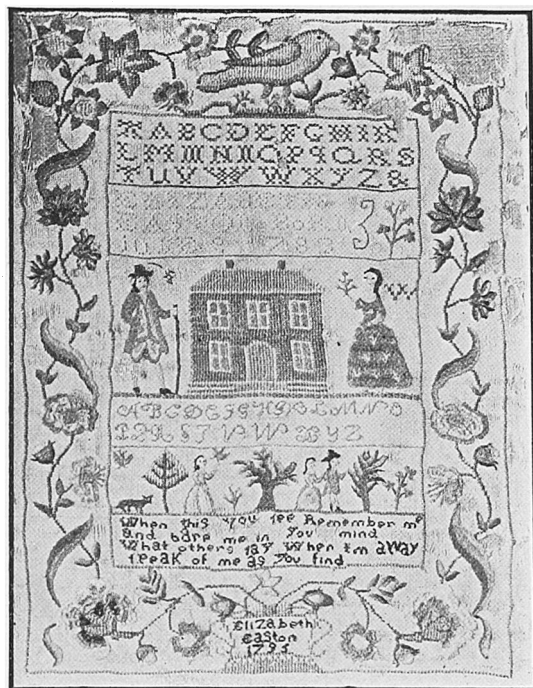
Interesting samplers may still be picked up in this country as in Europe, although most of them have wandered into collections or are in the hands of art and book dealers. Many a family cherishes the samplers made by their women of past generations, for proud mothers have had them framed, and girls have kept them perhaps with the vague notion of showing them to their own offspring, as they themselves had been taught to reverently admire their mother's and grandmother's work. Because of the use of the same materials, the following and copying of composition and coloring, the samplers of succeeding generations vary but little. The oldest samplers still in existence go back to the seventeenth century. Many people, and above all, women, have acquired large and valuable collections of samplers, some specializing in the fine English sampler, while the late Mr. Drake, whose samplers are shown in this article, made a specialty of the somewhat coarser American work.

As for the decorative value of samplers, their faint coloring and flatness make them agreeable, inconspicuous and very intimate, fitting equally well in

boudoir or library. The late Mr. Drake said: "For mural decoration they have about the same value as Japanese prints." These faded little samplers have become monuments to girls long since dead and forgotten. Looking at them, we feel more than ever the eternal and relentless progress of life. Comparatively few men and less women of the countless myriads who have peopled this earth, though many may have been well known in their day, have gone on record in history, all the others have passed into oblivion. That is why the unexpected encounter of the name and the proof of existence of some child-woman of long ago brought to our attention through the work of her hands, startles us and tends to make us sentimental. In the room where the samplers hang we fancy we faintly smell the sweet odor of lavender and pot-pourri and our sympathy goes out to the girl-child of long ago whose life was perhaps too serious.

While the young girls of the present generation are more concerned about going out into the world to take up their share of life's responsibilities, yet they are still very feminine and are most of them expert with the needle. In the best schools, the sampler is again seen and is given out as a part of the day's work. Children are learning the old-fashioned cross-stitch and it may be that the next generation will look back on the handiwork of to-day with the same reverence that we experience in the samplers of a hundred years ago.

Nothing brings us into a more intimate acquaintance with the women of earlier generations than the samplers which they have left us as evidences of their skill and patience in needlework.



EARLY AMERICAN SAMPLER. DATED 1795